

1 PHILLIP A. TALBERT  
2 United States Attorney  
3 KIMBERLY A. SANCHEZ  
Assistant United States Attorney  
2500 Tulare Street, Suite 4401  
Fresno, CA 93721  
Telephone: (559) 497-4000  
Facsimile: (559) 497-4099  
5

6 Attorneys for Plaintiff  
United States of America  
7

8 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
9  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

10  
11 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
12 Plaintiff,  
13 v.  
14 CHRISTIAN CLAUSTRO,  
15 Defendant.

CASE NO. 1:22-MJ-00197

STIPULATION REGARDING EXCLUDABLE  
TIME PERIODS UNDER SPEEDY TRIAL ACT;  
FINDINGS AND ORDER

DATE: April 14, 2023  
TIME: 2:00 p.m.

16  
17 This case is set for a preliminary hearing on April 14, 2023. The parties agree and stipulate to  
18 continue the preliminary hearing until May 5, 2023. Defense counsel has continued to be engaged in  
19 discussions and further investigation, and needs additional time to conclude that process.

20 On May 26, 2021, the Court issued General Order 631, which provided for a reopening of the  
21 courthouse in June 2021, recognized the continued public health emergency, continued to authorize  
22 video or teleconference court appearances in various cases, and noted the court's continued ability under  
23 the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (the "Act") to continue trials and  
24 other matters, excluding time under the Act. On June 27, 2022, the Court issued General Order 652,  
25 which "authorized the use of videoconference and teleconference technology in certain criminal  
26 proceedings under the in the Eastern District of California." This and previous General Orders highlight  
27 and were entered to address public health concerns related to COVID-19. Pursuant to F.R.Cr.P. 5.1(c)  
28 and (d), a preliminary hearing must be held "no later than 14 days after initial appearance if the

1 defendant is in custody,” unless the defendant consents and there is a “showing of good cause”, or if the  
 2 defendant does not consent and there is a “showing that extraordinary circumstances exist and justice  
 3 requires the delay.” Here, the defendant consents and there is good cause.

4       Although the General Orders address the district-wide health concern, the Supreme Court has  
 5 emphasized that the Speedy Trial Act’s end-of-justice provision “counteract[s] substantive  
 6 openendedness with procedural strictness,” “demand[ing] on-the-record findings” in a particular case.  
 7 *Zedner v. United States*, 547 U.S. 489, 509 (2006). “[W]ithout on-the-record findings, there can be no  
 8 exclusion under” § 3161(h)(7)(A). *Id.* at 507. Moreover, any such failure cannot be harmless. *Id.* at  
 9 509; *see also United States v. Ramirez-Cortez*, 213 F.3d 1149, 1153 (9th Cir. 2000) (explaining that a  
 10 judge ordering an ends-of-justice continuance must set forth explicit findings on the record “either orally  
 11 or in writing”).

12       Based on the plain text of the Speedy Trial Act—which *Zedner* emphasizes as both mandatory  
 13 and inexcusable—General Orders 611, 612, 617, 631, 652 and 662 (among others) require specific  
 14 supplementation. Ends-of-justice continuances are excludable only if “the judge granted such  
 15 continuance on the basis of his findings that the ends of justice served by taking such action outweigh  
 16 the best interest of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial.” 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A).  
 17 Moreover, no such period is excludable unless “the court sets forth, in the record of the case, either  
 18 orally or in writing, its reason or finding that the ends of justice served by the granting of such  
 19 continuance outweigh the best interests of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial.” *Id.*

20       The General Orders exclude delay in the “ends of justice.” 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7) (Local Code  
 21 T4). Although the Speedy Trial Act does not directly address continuances stemming from pandemics,  
 22 natural disasters, or other emergencies, this Court has discretion to order a continuance in such  
 23 circumstances. For example, the Ninth Circuit affirmed a two-week ends-of-justice continuance  
 24 following Mt. St. Helens’ eruption. *Furlow v. United States*, 644 F.2d 764 (9th Cir. 1981). The court  
 25 recognized that the eruption made it impossible for the trial to proceed. *Id.* at 767-68; *see also United*  
 26 *States v. Correa*, 182 F. Supp. 326, 329 (S.D.N.Y. 2001) (citing *Furlow* to exclude time following the  
 27 September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the resultant public emergency). The coronavirus is posing a  
 28 similar, albeit more enduring, barrier to the prompt proceedings mandated by the statutory rules.

In light of the societal context created by the foregoing, this Court should consider the following case-specific facts in finding excludable delay appropriate in this particular case under the ends-of-justice exception, § 3161(h)(7) (Local Code T4). If continued, this Court should designate a new date for the preliminary hearing. *United States v. Lewis*, 611 F.3d 1172, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010) (noting any pretrial continuance must be “specifically limited in time”).

## STIPULATION

Plaintiff United States of America, by and through its counsel of record, and defendant, by and through defendant's counsel of record, hereby stipulate as follows:

1. By previous order, this matter was set for preliminary hearing on April 14, 2023.
  2. By this stipulation, defendant now moves to continue the preliminary hearing until **May 5, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.** and to exclude time between April 14, 2023, and May 5, 2023, under Local Code T4.

3. The parties agree and stipulate, and request that the Court find the following:

  - a) The parties are discussing and conducting further investigation into pre-indictment matters, and need additional time to conclude that process.
  - b) The government represents that discovery consists of reports, and that an initial dissemination of discovery has been provided to defense, consisting of National Park Service Reports and the defendant's criminal history.
  - c) Counsel for defendant desires additional time to consult with her client, conduct further investigation, and discuss charges with the government. Defense has continued to investigate various issues related to the facts and a resolution since the last continuance was granted.
  - d) Counsel for defendant believes that failure to grant the above-requested continuance would deny him the reasonable time necessary for effective preparation, taking into account the exercise of due diligence.
  - e) The government does not object to the continuance.
  - f) Pursuant to F.R.Cr.P. 5.1(c) and (d), a preliminary hearing must be held "no later than 14 days after initial appearance if the defendant is in custody," unless the defendant

1 consents and there is a “showing of good cause”. Here, the defendant consents and there is good  
2 cause as set forth herein.

3 g) Based on the above-stated findings, the ends of justice served by continuing the  
4 case as requested outweigh the interest of the public and the defendant in an indictment or trial  
5 within the original dates prescribed by the Speedy Trial Act.

6 h) For the purpose of computing time under the Speedy Trial Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3161,  
7 et seq., within which an indictment must be filed and within which a trial must commence, the  
8 time period of April 14, 2023 to May 5, 2023, inclusive, is deemed excludable pursuant to 18  
9 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A), B(iv) [Local Code T4] because it results from a continuance granted by  
10 the Court at defendant’s request on the basis of the Court’s finding that the ends of justice served  
11 by taking such action outweigh the best interest of the public and the defendant in a speedy  
12 indictment/trial.

13 4. Nothing in this stipulation and order shall preclude a finding that other provisions of the  
14 Speedy Trial Act dictate that additional time periods are excludable from the period within which an  
15 indictment must be filed and a trial must commence.

16 IT IS SO STIPULATED.

17 Dated: March 28, 2023

PHILLIP A. TALBERT  
United States Attorney

18  
19 /s/ KIMBERLY A. SANCHEZ  
20 KIMBERLY A. SANCHEZ  
Assistant United States Attorney

21 Dated: March 28, 2023

22 /s/ ERIN SNIDER  
23 ERIN SNIDER  
Counsel for Defendant  
CHRISTIAN CLAUSTRO

24 **FINDINGS AND ORDER**

25 Having reviewed the parties Stipulation and proposed findings, the Court finds the following:

26 a) The parties are discussing and conducting further investigation into pre-indictment  
27 matters, and need additional time to conclude that process. Defense is in the process of retaining  
28 an expert to assist and the expert will require time to reach an opinion and produce such opinion

1 in a format capable of sharing for evaluation by both parties.

2 b) The government represents that discovery consists of reports, and that an initial  
3 dissemination of discovery has been provided to defense, consisting of National Park Service  
4 Reports and the defendant's criminal history.

5 c) Counsel for defendant desires additional time to consult with her client, conduct  
6 further investigation, and discuss charges with the government. Defense has continued to  
7 investigate various issues related to the facts and a resolution since the last continuance was  
8 granted.

9 d) Counsel for defendant believes that failure to grant the above-requested  
10 continuance would deny him the reasonable time necessary for effective preparation, taking into  
11 account the exercise of due diligence.

12 e) The government does not object to the continuance.

13 f) Pursuant to F.R.Cr.P. 5.1(c) and (d), a preliminary hearing must be held "no later  
14 than 14 days after initial appearance if the defendant is in custody," unless the defendant  
15 consents and there is a "showing of good cause". Here, the defendant consents and there is good  
16 cause as set forth herein.

17 g) Based on the above-stated findings, the ends of justice served by continuing the  
18 case as requested outweigh the interest of the public and the defendant in an indictment or trial  
19 within the original dates prescribed by the Speedy Trial Act.

20 h) For the purpose of computing time under the Speedy Trial Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3161,  
21 et seq., within which an indictment must be filed and within which a trial must commence, the  
22 time period of April 14, 2023 to May 5, 2023, inclusive, is deemed excludable pursuant to 18  
23 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A), B(iv) because it results from a continuance granted by the Court at  
24 defendant's request on the basis of the Court's finding that the ends of justice served by taking  
25 such action outweigh the best interest of the public and the defendant in a speedy  
26 indictment/trial.

27 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the preliminary hearing scheduled for April 14, 2023 at 2:00  
28 p.m. is continued to May 5, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the time between April

1 14, 2023 and May 5, 2023 is excluded pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A), B(iv) because it results  
2 from a continuance granted by the Court at defendant's request on the basis of the Court's finding that  
3 the ends of justice served by taking such action outweigh the best interest of the public and the  
4 defendant in a speedy indictment/trial.

5 IT IS SO ORDERED.  
6

7 Dated: April 10, 2023



---

UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28